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SUBJECT: IRMO DIRECTOR'S MEETING WITH
JAPANESE AMBASSADOR ON PROVINCIAL
RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS (PRT) AND US-JAPAN
RECONSTRUCTION COORDINATION

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On December 12, IRMO Director Daniel Speckhard met with Japanese Ambassador Toshiro Suzuki to discuss a potential Japanese role in the PRT initiative and US-Japan cooperation to assist in Iraqi reconstruction efforts. Suzuki reaffirmed Japan's continued desire to assist in Iraq's reconstruction and said he would consult Tokyo on the PRT initiative. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Speckhard began the December 12 meeting by thanking Suzuki for Japan's deployment of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in Samawa and the SDF's reconstruction efforts in southern Iraq. Speckhard then asked Suzuki about Japan's possible participation in the PRTs. Suzuki replied that it might be difficult to deploy Japanese civilian subject matter experts to PRTs because of legal constraints on the movement of Japanese government non-combatant personnel in Iraq. Noting the difficulty of the SDF's involvement in the PRTs in Afghanistan, Suzuki also explained that the challenge to deploying SDF personnel in the PRT initiative arises from the SDF's restricted rules of engagement.

13. (SBU) Speckhard rejoined that as the second largest donor in Iraq, Japan would benefit from the presence of civilian representatives in PRTs. Even if they were not authorized to leave the PRT compound, they could still function as provincial liaison officials between the Japanese government and the Iraqi government. By providing on-site information to the Japanese government and enabling Iraqis to directly access the Japanese development aid system, Japanese PRT members could provide real value to the Japanese government. The Iraqis might access Japanese technical expertise and engage in networking, and the Japanese government would be able to shape development strategies in Iraq.

14. (SBU) In response to Suzuki's query concerning the type of experts needed in PRTs, Speckhard said experts are needed in procurement, budget, personnel resources, management, urban planning, and development strategy. Speckhard went on that the PRTs will help oversee USAID's programs in the field and work with the Gulf Region Division (GRD) of the Army Corps of Engineers to oversee reconstruction projects. Suzuki asked whether a Japanese representative on PRTs might oversee Japanese reconstruction programs. Speckhard replied that such persons might possibly do so.

15. (SBU) After describing the initial PRT rollout -- PRTs have been established in Mosul, Hillah, and Kirkuk -- and possible PRTs elsewhere, Speckhard told Suzuki the PRT initiative is a two-year program. He then encouraged him to consider the opportunity to support and influence economic development in Iraq through the PRTs. Suzuki, who earlier had noted the flexibility and modular make-up of the PRTs, said he would consult Tokyo. He repeated, however, that his government is reluctant to send additional personnel to Iraq, adding that security arrangements will probably need to be worked out if the Japanese Government assigns personnel to PRTs.

16. (SBU) Toward the end of the discussion, Suzuki said the Iraq Strategic Review Board has approved three electric power projects to be financed by Japan's soft-loan program. The Japanese Government is also contributing to the Secretariat of the Electricity Sector Working Group, and is interested in expediting contact between the office of the IRMO Senior Consultant on Electricity and Japanese representatives. Speckhard and Suzuki agreed that U.S. and Japanese reconstruction experts should meet in Amman to consult on our respective reconstruction programs, possibly in January 2006. Suzuki promised to consult Tokyo on a time and place for a bilateral meeting of U.S. and Japanese experts.

